

## GARDENS.

The wide fair gardens, the rich lush gardens,  
Which no man planted, and no man tills,  
Their strong seeds drifted, their brave bloom  
littered,  
Near and far o'er the vales and hills:  
Sip the bees from their cups of sweetness,  
Poised above them the wild free wind,  
And night and morn from their doors are  
borne  
The dreams of the tunes that blithe hearts  
sing.

The waving gardens, the fragrant gardens  
That toss in the sun by the broad highway,  
Growing together, coarse and heather,  
Astor and golden-rod all the day,  
Poppies dark with the wine of slumber,  
Daisies bright with the look of dawn,  
The gentian blue, and the loar: year through  
The flowers that carry the seasons on.

And the dear old gardens, the pleasant  
gardens  
Where mother used to potter about,  
Tying and pulling, and sparingly culling,  
And watching each bud as its flower laughed  
out:  
Hollyhocks here, and the prince's feather,  
Larkspur and primrose, and lilies white  
Sweet were the dear old fashioned gardens  
Where we kissed the mother, and said,  
"Good-night!"

—Harper's Bazar.

## Lady Latimer's Escape.

BY CHARLOTTE M. BRIENE.

### CHAPTER I.

Fate is Against Some People From the  
Cradle to the Grave.

"Change is the law of wind and moon and  
lover—

And yet I think, lost Love, had you been true,  
Some golden fruits had ripened for your  
plucking  
You will not find in gardens that are new."

Many years have come and gone in  
my life since this eventful one of which  
my story tells. My name is Audrey  
Lovel, and I am the eldest daughter  
of the Reverend Archibald Lovel, and  
Millicent, his wife. The Reverend  
Archibald has been for many years  
vicar of St. Hubert's church at King's  
Lorton. He lives in a beautiful, old-  
fashioned vicarage, just outside the  
town of King's Lorton, a house such  
as you see in illustrated Christmas an-  
nuals, with gable ends and great  
stacks of chimneys, and great win-  
dows with pleasant seats in the deep  
bays. Tangle of roses and jasmine  
cover it in the summer; in the winter  
there is a wealth of green holly. A  
large, old-fashioned garden surrounds  
it, where every kind of tree grows  
and flower blooms. A bright, sunny  
orchard lies beyond that, the gates of  
which lead into the clover meadow, and  
at the foot of the meadow runs the  
clear, deep, beautiful river Linne, the  
loveliest river in England, and the  
great torment of my mother's life, for  
the boys were always coming to grief  
over it, either skating when the ice  
was not an inch thick, or swimming  
when the current was too strong—  
rowing when the wind was against  
them—fishing and falling head-first  
into the stream. That river was the  
one blot on my mother's otherwise  
happy life.

My father, not being by any means  
a rich man, was blessed with the  
usual large number of children. He  
was heard to say, despairingly, that  
he should cease to count them after  
the number of seven was reached.

We were nine in all. Six hearty,  
healthy, hungry boys, and three girls.  
I was the eldest. Then came the  
eldest son, certainly the most terrible  
boy in the world. My mother used to  
say of him, "Bob is all a boy," and  
that means a great deal. Archie, the  
second, was not quite his equal in mis-  
chief, but he had every desire to be  
so. Willie, the third, was a quiet,  
well-behaved boy, who lived in con-  
tinual fear of his two elder brothers.  
Then came a sweet, fair-haired little  
maiden; it was rest for one's eyes to  
look upon her. She was called after  
our mother, Millicent. Then three  
more boys, the sole object of whose  
existence seemed to be eating and  
noise, varied with skirmishes of all  
kinds, carried on in all places and at  
all times—skirmishes that almost  
made my hair stand on end. Then  
came the last, sweetest, fairest, and  
best, a wonderfully fat, lovely baby  
girl, named Trotter; the roundest,  
prettiest baby ever seen, worshipped  
by the family, adored by the boys.

"The boys!" Does any sympathetic  
reader know what that means? If  
you suddenly hear a tremendous crash  
like the roar of artillery, or a great up-  
heaval like a tropical earthquake, and  
you ask in alarm, "What is it?" the  
inevitable answer is, "The boys." If  
there is a rush up and down the stair-  
case, followed by sudden shrieks, un-  
earthly noises, succeeded by silence  
even more terrible, and you ask,  
"What is it?" "The boys." Any un-  
expected explosion, any unforeseen ac-  
cident, any unthought-of hap, had but  
one source, "the boys."

Yet how we loved them, and what  
fine, manly fellows they were. But  
they were the very torment of our  
lives. How they enjoyed luring that  
unhappy little maiden, Millicent, into the  
most unheard-of situations. The only  
one they held in supreme awe was  
Baby Trotter, who ruled them with a  
rod of iron.

A large, happy, healthy family, and  
at the time this story opens I was just  
eighteen. I had, thanks to my father's  
indulgence, received an excellent edu-  
cation, and was now supposed to be  
helping my mother.

Being the eldest daughter I had cer-  
tain privileges. I had a dear little  
room of my own, the window of which

overlooked the green meadow and the  
lovely rippling river! I had the  
entry to my father's library, a privilege  
which "the boys" most virtuously  
abandoned. Altogether I loved and en-  
joyed my life, with its simple duties  
and pleasures. I had thought little of  
love and lovers. The boys absorbed  
all my leisure time—to save them  
from drowning, to keep them from  
breaking their necks by sliding down  
the great carved balusters, exhorting  
them as much as possible not to climb  
the very tallest trees in search of  
birds'-nests, and preventing them  
from throwing stones quite close to  
the windows.

My father took life very easily—the  
boys seemed to look upon him as a be-  
loved friend and a natural enemy; no  
skirmishes were indulged in in his  
presence, no practical jokes. When  
they had misbehaved themselves to  
any great extent, they were very wary  
in turning corners, lest he should  
spring upon them suddenly, and a pec-  
uliar shrill whistle was the signal for  
clearing the coast; it meant that he  
was coming, and that summary justice  
might be expected. My father was a  
well-bred gentleman, and a splendid  
scholar; he spent the greater part of  
his life in writing and reading. His  
income was a small one, but my mother  
managed it.

My mother was one of the sweetest  
and most gracious of women, loved by  
everyone, the soul of generosity and  
kindness. She never raised her voice,  
even to the boys. She was essentially  
a motherly woman, and the boys were  
the pride, the delight, the torment,  
and joy of her life. She was well-  
born, well-bred, a lady in every sense  
of the word. She could make pud-  
dings and cakes, darn stockings, and  
yet in the drawing room she had all  
the graces and sweet stateliness of an  
accomplished lady. I may mention  
that the boys' wardrobe was something  
fearful to behold, but my mother un-  
derstood it.

There was no affluence, no luxury  
in our house; and, indeed, there was a  
difficulty in making both ends meet.  
But we were very happy, very loving,  
devoted to one another. There was  
no quarrelling, a terrific fight among  
the boys did not always mean a quar-  
rel. There was no selfishness; there  
is no such school for learning self-de-  
nial and self-control as a large family.

About two miles from the vicarage  
stood the grandest mansion in the  
county, the residence of Lord Latimer,  
the greatest man in the county, and it  
was called Lorton's Cray. It was the  
wonder of our childish lives. A mag-  
nificent mansion, with thick, gray,  
ivy-covered walls. It had been built  
in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and  
held every beauty of the architecture  
of that period. The rooms were all  
large and lofty, with great windows;  
the floors and staircases were all of  
polished oak; the ceilings painted, the  
entrance hall a marvel of stained-  
glass windows, with a magnificent  
groined roof.

Once or twice in our lives we had  
been allowed to go through this house.  
It produced such an impression on the  
boys that they were silent for some  
days afterward. The picture-gallery  
ran the whole length of the house, and  
held some priceless paintings. The  
portraits of the Latimers for many  
generations past hung there, with a  
fine collection of modern paintings.

The drawing-room was a magnificent  
apartment; we held our breath as we  
stood on the threshold; even Bob and  
Archie collapsed—they were speech-  
less. It was all white and gold.  
There was no color except the rich  
bloom of the rare flowers that stood in  
the jardinières; the hangings were of  
white velvet and white satin embroi-  
dered with gold; chairs, couches,  
lounges the same. From the large  
windows there was a superb view of  
the square of fountains and the deep  
green of the rich foliage beyond.

There was a spacious banquetting-  
hall, a cozy dining-room, a library  
that was unequalled for its size, a  
morning-room opening on a rose gar-  
den. The great state apartments were  
in the eastern wing. There were in-  
numerable pretty little rooms, in-  
numerable pretty nooks and corners  
in the old house.

It was a house full of surprises;  
where it was least expected one would  
find a large window with comfortable  
seats, a lonely little room, a door  
opening on to a quaint staircase that  
led to the grounds. Then, all over  
the place there was a perfect wealth  
of ornaments, the accumulated treas-  
ures of long generations—and the Lat-  
imers had always been very wealthy.  
The grounds were magnificent; the  
fine old trees, the beautiful, undulating  
park, the lovely fairy dells where vio-  
lets and cowslips grew, the matchless  
terraces, the broad marble steps that  
led from one to the other—it was all  
beautiful.

When we came from our last visit,  
my young brothers looked at me with  
contemplative, solemn eyes.

"Archie," said Bob, "you will be, I  
think, good-looking. I hope you will  
remember your brothers, and marry  
well."

"A brother-in-law with a house like  
that would suit me," said Archie em-  
phatically.

"Of course, as your brothers, we  
should be offered the run of the

house," said Bob. "In fact, it would  
doubtless be thrown open to us."

How little I thought, while they  
teased me and enjoyed themselves  
over this future brother-in-law—how  
little I dreamed of what was to be!

Lord Latimer had not been to King's  
Lorton within my recollection. The  
house was beautifully kept. There  
was a faithful old housekeeper, Mrs.  
Heath; an ancient butler, who seemed  
to be part of the place; and plenty of  
servants. Everything was kept in  
readiness; no matter when or how the  
old lord might return, he would have  
found everything prepared for him at  
any moment. For some years there  
was no mention made of Lord Lat-  
imer's return; all at once we heard  
that he was coming back, and bring-  
ing with him a young wife.

"A young wife!" cried my mother,  
when she heard it. "Why, that must  
be impossible; that must be untrue;  
he is over 60."

"Yes," replied my father, incau-  
tiously enough, considering the boys  
were all round him; "but then he is a  
very well-preserved man."

And the boys spent the remainder  
of the day in trying to find out what a  
"well-preserved" man was, and then  
making caricatures of him.

### CHAPTER II.

The news of Lord Latimer's mar-  
riage and return spread like wild-fire  
over the country; nothing else was  
spoken of.

"It will be good for us and good for  
the poor," said my father. "Lord  
Latimer is very generous."

But I noticed one thing—my father  
never spoke of any other quality of  
the earl. He was generous, and he  
attended church regularly—two fine  
qualities.

Our children were all on the qui-  
vive to see the new lady of Lorton's  
Cray. We heard that the old lord had  
suddenly returned without having  
given one moment's warning, bringing  
with him his young wife and her  
lady-maid. She was beautiful, they  
said, as an angel, her hair glittered  
like gold, and her face was fair as the  
dawn of the morning. She wore rich  
dresses of strange texture, and rare  
jewels. Some said she was proud and  
capricious, others that she was most  
loving and gentle. Every one gave a  
different opinion of her, and she had  
made a different impression on every  
person who had seen her—from which  
fact my father argued that she must  
be a wonderful woman.

Lord Latimer rode over to see my  
father the day after his arrival, an act  
of attention which delighted him. He  
behaved most generously—he gave  
him a check for the poor, a check for  
the church; he promised to assist with  
some alterations on which my father  
had set his heart; he inquired after  
the number of children at the vicar-  
age, smiled when he heard there were  
six boys; he was—and we all liked  
him best for that—most amiable and  
agreeable to our dear mother; he  
spoke of his wife, said the journey  
had tired her, and that she was not  
quite well—but there was a curious  
tightening of the lips as he spoke of  
her.

The next day was Sunday, and we  
were all interested, knowing that we  
should see Lady Latimer at church. I  
need not say that our family pew was  
a sight to be remembered. Nine  
healthy, happy faces ornamented it.  
I am sorry to add that the conduct of  
the inmates was not always above sus-  
picion. If Bob looked particularly de-  
vout, or Archie collected and calm, I  
knew that a dire catastrophe im-  
pending. It is not in boys' nature to  
remain quiet for more than ten min-  
utes, if for so long.

I am ashamed to confess with what  
longing of impatience we awaited the  
coming of the Lorton's Cray party to  
church. Bob, who excelled himself  
in wickedness that morning, was busy,  
I could see, making a caricature on  
one side of the leaves of his prayer-  
book. Archie was making a desperate  
effort to become possessed of it. Mil-  
lie, seated between the two belliger-  
ents, had a terrible time of it, and  
looked ready to cry.

I had just restored order when they  
came. I saw something that looked  
to me like a vision of grace and loveli-  
ness floating up the aisle of the old  
church. I saw rich silk and velvet  
sweep the ground, priceless lace fall  
in perfumed folds, jewels gleam here  
and there; in the breathless silence  
the soft frou-frou of the rich silk was  
distinctly heard.

I did not see her face until she was  
seated in the pew and all the excite-  
ment incident upon their coming was  
over; then I looked at her. I loved  
her that first moment; I have loved  
her ever since, and I shall love her  
until I die.

In what words can I tell the dainty,  
marvelous beauty of that fair young  
face, the perfection of its features, the  
loveliness of its coloring? It was the  
perfection of fair and brilliant beauty.

A low, white brow, round with  
golden rings of hair clustered, shining  
rings of rich, rare gold; delicate, level  
brows, dark, beautiful eyes, a mouth  
that seemed at once all good and all  
sweetness, a delicate chin, perfectly  
molded—a face that, once seen, could  
never be forgotten.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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months he breathed his last, a victim to im-  
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fat baby boy, 18 months old—the very

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